



Flathead Conservation District  
133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT 59901  
www.flatheadcd.org 406-752-4220

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### **CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE**

Vice- Chair Pete Woll called the August 27, 2018, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the conference room.

### **Board members present:**

Pete Woll, Vice Chairman; Dean Sirucek, Secretary/Treasurer; John Ellis, Supervisor; Verdell Jackson, Supervisor; being a quorum of the Board.

**Board members absent:** Ronald Buentemeier, Chair; Lori Curtis, Supervisor; Mark Siderius, Supervisor. Absences are excused.

Also in attendance were: Valerie Kurth, Hailey Graf and Ginger Kauffman, FCD staff; Samantha Tappenbeck, Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM).

### **MINUTES**

Dean Sirucek motioned "to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2018 310-Stream Permit meeting as presented." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Email: A Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) aquatic invasive species monitoring crew has confirmed that invasive faucet snails have been discovered in Lake Frances near Valier. FWP relies on the public to be on the lookout for invasive species and report suspected sightings. Contact the FWP fisheries office at 406-444-2440 or use the online report form at <http://fwp.mt.gov/doingBusiness/contactUs/aisSighting.html>
2. Email: Montana Watershed Coordination Council *Watershed News* includes:
  - \* Study results when a Montana State University team used low grade Montana **wool**, which is usually discarded, as a **restoration tool**. Results showed 3-4 times more perennial grass than current methods. The wool holds moisture longer, provides nitrogen to plants as it decomposes, and adheres better to the soil.
  - \* 2018 Montana Watershed Symposium, October 10-12, 2018, at the Whitefish Lake Lodge, Whitefish, MT. [www.mtwatershed.org](http://www.mtwatershed.org)
3. Email: National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) publications: *NACD eResource, Conservation Clips*, <http://www.nacdnet.org>
4. Email: Richland and Roosevelt CD's and the Rangeland Resources Committee announce the annual Montana Range Tour, September 5-6.



For more information please visit

<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/conservation-districts/rangeland-resource-program> or register on line at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-montana-range-tour-tickets-46078652490?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>.

Contact: Stacey Barta, DNRC, 406-444-6619.

5. Email: Memo from Dan McGowan, Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) containing information regarding the resolution process, MACD By-Law Changes, and MACD Area Director elections <https://macdnet.org>
6. Email: Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM) publication *the Montana Conservationist* <http://swcdm.org>
7. Email: SWCDM announces funding provided by provided by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality to fund local education and outreach efforts in Montana to address water quality issues resulting from nonpoint source pollution. Mini-grants of up to \$3,000 are available and SWCDM has approximately \$12,000 to award for this cycle. Deadline October 12, 2018, 5:00 P.M. Contact Jessica Makus, SWCDM, [jessica@macdnet.org](mailto:jessica@macdnet.org), 406-443-5711. <http://swcdm.org>
8. Email: National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) publications *NACD Forestry Notes*, *NACD eResource*, *NACD Conservation Clips* <http://www.nacdnet.org>
9. Email: 2018 Montana Range Tour, September 5-6, Richland County Event Center, 2118 West Holly Street, Sidney, MT. Contact Tifney Kempton 406-787-5232, Ext 101 or Stacey Barta [sbarta@mt.gov](mailto:sbarta@mt.gov) 406-930-0693

### **FINANCIAL**

The following bill was due and paid prior to this meeting:

1. CenturyLink \$273.97

Valerie Kurth explained she had researched the option to pay online. This was not feasible as they required an additional fee with each credit card payment. As the district always pays their bill, the company was able to put a hold on the account so no late fees are assessed for up to 45 days.

The following bills were reviewed:

1. MontanaSky Networks \$20.00
2. North Powell Conservation District \$100.00

John Ellis motioned "to approve the bills as presented." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one was present to comment on items not listed on the agenda.



### **310's**

**Juno, FL2018038, Walker Creek, stream area restoration:** Valerie Kurth explained the Juno's filed a 310-application to correct damage to their property from unauthorized work done by an adjoining landowner. Ronald Buentemeier asked that the application be placed on the meeting agenda, so the landowner could begin work as soon as possible. Valerie noted that Juno's have also filed a complaint to document the unauthorized work.

Dean Sirucek motioned "to approve the application as submitted. The 15-day waiting period is waived with concurrence by FWP." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Pollinator Garden Proposal:** Valerie Kurth explained that in June, Hailey Graf had given an update on her research into pollinator activities, as promoting pollinator habitats and workshops have been included in the Flathead CD Work Plan for the last two years. The board was previously supportive of researching the possibility of installing a demonstration garden. Valerie and Hailey had ideas about partnerships, but decided to first contact Tim Birk, who owns our building and the adjacent lot to the west. Tim was very supportive and said the district could use the lot for a garden. Staff was particularly inspired by the Education and Outreach Center which Gallatin CD has developed. Gallatin CD built a huge center which is part garden and part education center for classes and workshops. Hailey drafted a proposal based on research she has done and conversations she has had with contractors, landscapers, and people who have built similar gardens. Valerie noted that staff is very excited about the possibilities, but staff enthusiasm means very little without strong board support. Hailey went through the following proposal.

#### **Opportunity**

Pollinators are a fundamental building block for our natural systems, but their importance and conservation needs are often poorly understood. As a Conservation District we have the opportunity to address this issue. An opportunity to design a garden to not only provide much-needed pollinator habitat in an urban area, but for education and hands-on learning as well.

#### **Goals**

- Create and maintain habitat for pollinators including forage, nesting, and overwintering.
- Provide educational opportunities through an outdoor learning center, interpretative displays, youth education and adult workshops.
- Foster beneficial, working relationships with landowners, businesses, and organizations in the community.

#### **Strategy**

The design and use of the garden will have three focus areas: the physical space, outreach, and educational program development.

**Physical Space:** We envision the space as a working garden that will be useful for demonstrating techniques to create pollinator habitat, conserve water, and maintain soil health. To accomplish this, a walking path will circle through the garden. Along the walking path, plant identification signs will describe how plants can be used and interpretive



displays will showcase conservation practices such as xeriscaping, rain gardens, and windbreaks. Raised beds can also be used to demonstrate options for pollinator gardens in urban settings. The center of the garden will be an outdoor learning space with tables and chairs, which will be conducive to presentations, meetings, and kids' activities. The space could also include a supply shed with covered parking for the Rolling Rivers Trailer.

Outreach: Garden outreach will serve two purposes: advertisement for the garden to build interest and awareness, and building relationships with the community. Outreach will begin before construction of the garden by reaching out to local conservation education groups, such as Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Flathead Community of Resource Educators (CORE), and Montana State University (MSU) Extension, and inviting them to contribute to the development and use of the garden. Each stage of the construction process will also be documented and filmed to produce a series of how-to type videos and instructional handouts. Once hardscaping and planting are complete, the district will host an open house and invite the local community to tour the garden.

Educational Program Development: Educational programs will be modeled after the Gallatin Conservation District's Outdoor Education Center programs. However, frequency and duration of programs will depend on staff time as well as interest from other groups and organizations. Gallatin Conservation District has developed a very successful weekly program by inviting different guest lecturers each week, reducing their overall time commitment to just logistical support for the presentations. They host an average of 30 kids and 10 adults each week, 18 weeks a year. In addition, our outdoor learning center would provide a space to showcase the Rolling Rivers Trailer and host field trips. There are also many other auxiliary topics that can be taught using the demonstration garden. We could begin incorporating these topics into the garden through additional demonstrations and interpretive displays. Example topics might include, nonpoint source pollution, alternative weed management, rain gardens, xeriscaping, urban conservation, and soil health.

### Timeline Alternatives

We recognize that, to be most successful, the garden should start small and be developed strategically and in stages. However, to build a solid foundation that can be expanded in the future, the earliest stages will require the largest effort and cost. After that, projects can be added on as we have time and money. This first effort and cost will include site prep, hardscaping, initial planting, and planning for long-term maintenance. Once site-prep, hardscaping, and initial planting are completed, we can focus on developing interpretative materials for the garden, community outreach, and developing additional events to host at the site. Although we have done extensive research and talked with multiple experts (Gallatin CD Administrator, landscapers, excavators, NRCS), we recognize that this project is a big commitment and may have unanticipated obstacles. Thus, we have developed three possible project timelines outlines – each with a different rate of progress. Each alternative has different advantages and disadvantages.

Alternative A: Ready for use Summer 2019 (hardscaping in fall, planting in spring)

Alternative B: Ready for use Summer 2019 (hardscaping and planting in spring)

Alternative C: Ready for use Summer 2020



Hailey presented a sample aerial drawing of what the center might look like and a draft budget, and the supervisors asked her questions.

John Ellis asked about **fencing** the garden area. Hailey responded that fencing often attracts vandalism, and it would add additional concerns about locking a gate. She would like to use a living fence that could demonstrate windbreaks instead.

Verdell Jackson asked about **ownership** of the lot. Hailey stated Tim Birk is the owner of the lot and the USDA building. He would lease the land to the district under the same current lease, which could be renewed along with the office building. Tim is also willing to allow the garden to be connected to the existing water sprinkler system. Verdell asked if Tim would sell the land. Hailey said that they have only discussed a long-term lease.

Pete Woll asked about the **shed area and if there would be a path large enough to accommodate the Rolling Rivers Trailer**. Hailey said the shed would house tools and the Rolling Rivers Trailer in the off season. It could be placed in an area where the trailer could easily be moved in and out, and a path could be made wider for the trailer.

John asked if there would be more **children or adults** using this area. Hailey drew comparisons with Gallatin CD's programs. They initially started with children's programs, but have expanded to host adult workshops. Gallatin CD has minimized their workload by bringing in guest speakers for their workshops, and they have been very successful. Hailey also presented a list of groups and individuals that want to or could contribute to the project or would use the center once it is established.

Verdell asked about the types of **native grass and maintenance**. Hailey explained that she envisions a lot of ground-covering plants that require little maintenance. She also suggested planting the native grass mixes, which the district developed with NRCS and which are sold at CHS. She noted that CHS is also excited about the project, because they get a lot of questions and felt they could send people to talk with the district and view the garden as an example.

Verdell also asked about rain gardens and xeriscaping. Hailey explained that they are gardens specifically designed to filter runoff from parking lots or roofs. Runoff gets directed to the rain garden, so the plants need very little extra water. She also explained that xeriscaping to select and arrange or organize your plants to conserve water. It focuses on native plants adapted to drought and uses watering systems such as a drip line to target specific plants instead of spraying a large area and wasting water.

Hailey presented a preliminary budget sheet that included in-kind donations. John asked about **grants and their timelines**. Valerie and Hailey explained that beside our budget, grants may be available through the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM), Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) HB223 program, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), the Montana Native Plant Society, and even some private companies. Both the SWCDM and HB223 are due in October, and award information would probably be available by December.



Verdell asked who would **take care of the garden**. Hailey stated that many partners, such as NRCS, have already expressed willingness to help with installation and maintenance tasks. There would also be opportunities for service projects, which minimize staff time on the project. Valerie added that the local Master Gardener program would probably be interested because they are required to do service for the certification.

Verdell asked about the **watering system and water pressure**. Hailey stated she had met with a representative from a local sprinkler business, who looked at the site and the existing system. He suggested a simple zone system with driplines attached to lateral lines, which would cost approximately \$2,000. Hailey will ask Tim about flushing the lines and water costs. Hailey also explained that the existing water pressure in the system is more than sufficient for the driplines.

Pete asked if a **zone change** would be needed and if there would be issues with our insurance. Dean answered that the street on west and south borders may have to be improved because of the condo units that will be built to the south of the USDA building. He suggested contacting the condo project planner. Hailey said she had already contacted the insurance company, and there may be a small increase in our premium.

Dean asked about **paths** being made wheelchair or walker friendly. Hailey acknowledged that accessibility was something she had researched. The proposal uses gravel because it is inexpensive. In addition, any other surface would require a gravel path, so it is a good starting place. Pete recommended not to include a restroom.

Supervisors suggested other **contacts** such as the Evergreen Chamber of Commerce, County Commissioner Pam Holmquist, the Memory Facility next door, and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Hailey stated she had contacted MSU Extension and they are interested in partnering for some workshops in the future. Pete noted the Vo-Ag grows plants in their greenhouses that could potentially be transplanted into the garden. Dean suggested asking the NRCS engineer if he could do a topographical map of the lot to help better determine the best location for the rain garden and the overall site plan.

Hailey said she had met with Ronald Buentemeier last week, and he was generally supportive of the project. He suggested developing a list of potential partners who would benefit from the garden and a formal, long-term plan for maintenance and use. He thought the board should take time to think through the project before committing.

John Ellis and Dean Sirucek agreed that Alternative A is too soon based upon grant timelines and Ronald's suggestion not to rush. Verdell suggested that the board meet with Tim Birk. Pete recommended that Hailey continue to gather information and bring it to the next business meeting.

John and Pete agreed that the first step should be a contract with the landowner. Valerie Kurth stated that Tara Fugina, Flathead County Attorney's office, had recommended amending the lease to add the land. John agreed that it is important to have something that protects the district, and that it be approved by the board. He also asked for more specifics in the budget. Dean thought that at least partial payment of the water bill by the district





would be appropriate. Pete noted if a contract can be done then weed spraying could be done by the county this fall.

Pete asked if the supervisors were enthusiastic about the project. Supervisors thought the project is a good idea, and John stated Hailey knows more about the receptivity of the community and the feasibility of doing this project. Hailey offered to continue working on this and bring further information to the September business meeting.

**Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC) Symposium:** Valerie Kurth reminded the board that the MWCC Symposium will be held this October in Whitefish, and noted that the early bird rate ends August 31<sup>st</sup> if any Supervisors want to attend. Flathead CD is a sponsor and is administering a HB223 grant for travel. Valerie asked if any supervisors wanted to attend and proposed to send both her and Hailey to the symposium. She noted that as a sponsor, the district receives one free registration (value of \$250). Valerie also proposed to send Hailey to the pre-conference workshop for \$40.

John Ellis motioned “to approve Valerie Kurth and Hailey Graf to attend the MWCC Symposium, and approve Hailey to attend the National Geographic pre-conference workshop on October 9<sup>th</sup> for a total cost of \$290.” Verdell Jackson seconded.” Motion carried unanimously.

**End of Month Budget Report:** The July End of Month Budget Report was reviewed with the board. Dean Sirucek motioned “to approve the July End of Month budget report.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**FY 2018/2019 Final Budget:** FY 2018/2019 Final Budget was reviewed with the board. Dean Sirucek motioned “to approve the FY 2018/2019 Final Budget dated 8/27/2018, and approve the resolution and submit it to the Flathead County Finance office.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

## **REPORTS**

**Flathead CD Staff:** Valerie Kurth and Hailey Graf reported:

### ***District Office and Outreach***

1. Advertisements: Flathead Beacon (Livestock & Cost-Share, 310 Law)
2. Valerie conducted Hailey’s 3-month performance evaluation on July 24<sup>th</sup>.
3. The new NRCS State Conservationist, Tom Watson, stopped by the USDA building to meet federal and conservation district personnel.

### ***310-related***

Hailey compiled 12 sets of Adopted Rules from districts west of the divide to compare definitions of immediate bank and mean high water mark. She spoke with other districts and Laurie Zeller about procedures for determining immediate bank and jurisdiction. Valerie assembled the suggestions from supervisors and FWP into one document for discussion at the August 310 meeting. She also participated in the 310 Committee Meeting on July 31<sup>st</sup> (phone).



### ***On-the-Ground Projects***

Cow Creek – The 319 contract was approved and signed in early August. Valerie is coordinating with partners to complete the final design and initiate the permit process. She and several partners spent a day meeting with the two landowners to discuss watering/crossing locations, fence perimeters, and photo point locations. Valerie is drafting the monitoring plan and helping with the landowner agreements. She is also facilitating communication between project partners and our Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) project manager, especially with regard to match reporting and contract requirements.

Haskill Creek – Hailey worked with Kent Reimer to repair the tree protection cages along the creek and discussed plans for long-term maintenance and when to remove cages.

### ***Landowner Programs***

#### ***Cost-Shares***

FY19 – Valerie has been in communication with our newly contracted cost-share recipients to answer questions. She also arranged for an NRCS grazing specialist from Missoula, Jedidiah Dunn, to visit a landowner who will be unable to participate in the program this year, but may be able to next year.

*Valerie asked the board if they would be open to doing a multi-year program. Dean Sirucek stated he would support that as re-habilitation needs to be done over several years on that site. Pete Woll stated it needs to be on a case by case basis, and in this situation we are helping to support the resource. Valerie will contact the landowner this winter to reassess the situation.*

We have received several new inquiries about the program, but no new applications for this fiscal year have been submitted.

Seedling Program – the DNRC Nursery will start taking orders in mid-September. We have already received five inquiries about the program.

### ***Education and Outreach***

Rolling Rivers – Hailey used the Rolling Rivers Trailer (RRT) at the Creston Fish Hatchery on July 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> for presentations to the Kalispell Parks and Rec summer programs. Ninety-four students and approximately 15 adults were in attendance. Hailey, Valerie, Dean, John, and Ronald, also used the RRT at the North West MT Fair, August 15-19. The trailer was used as the central display and attention-getter for the fair booth with great success. Employees from the Flathead Weed Department, Flathead National Forest, and Glacier National Park also helped to share information about the trailer with educators and the public. An estimated 4,250 people of all ages viewed the trailer.

#### ***Website/social media***

Hailey wrote several new posts for our website and Facebook page on topics including resources available through MSU Extension, xeriscaping, composting, fire danger, and water conservation. Website traffic included 393 users and Facebook posts reached 1,402 people from July 24<sup>th</sup> - August 22<sup>nd</sup>.





Samantha Tappenbeck, Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM) reported:

**Blog post:** The Basics of Water Resources in Montana

<http://swcdm.org/the-basics-of-water-resources-in-montana/>

**Upcoming events:**

- **Governor's Drought & Water Supply Committee Meeting:** September 18, 9:30-11:30AM; skype and call-in available, more info:  
<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/water/drought-management>
- **AIS Listening Session:** Tuesday, September 11, 5:00-8:00PM, Homewood Suites, 195 Hutton Ranch Road, Kalispell
- **Area 5 meeting:** September 25, 2018, hosted by North Powell CD in Helmville
- **Upper Columbia Conservation Commission:** September 26, 9:00AM-4:00PM, Glacier National Park/Community Room
- **Montana Watershed Coordination Council Symposium:** October 10-12, Whitefish Mountain Lodge

**Drought report by county, August 21, 2018**

**Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS):** Jessica Ressel, NRCS, submitted the following report:

**Office Business:**

- CSP renewal is in progress, there are 4 renewals (2014 Contracts). Contracting for this renewal period will be completed by November 2018.
- Field season is in full swing for Environmental Qualities Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) certifications and application resource inventories.
- Application deadline for EQIP was June 1, 2018. As of now, there are currently 13 new applications, land uses include forestry, cropland and pasture.
- Continual work on thinning projects, and field work pertaining to EQIP/CSP and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) contracts.

**Contracts:** 55 active contracts:

**Administrative:**

- The new District Conservationist has been selected. Sean Johnson from Milaca MN will be starting in the Kalispell office on September 4<sup>th</sup>.
- NRCS all employee meeting will be Sept 11-13<sup>th</sup> in Billings. All NRCS personal will be required to attend.



**Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD):** Pete Woll reported he participated in the MACD conference call this morning with the new Director, Dan McGowan. The meeting included a basic review of current work, future work and the direction Dan wants to take.

**Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB):** Dean Sirucek reported the August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting included zoning changes and a plat approval. These were sent forward to the county commissioners with positive reviews. Amendments to subdivision regulations, zone amendments and requirements were also on the agenda.

**Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB):** John Ellis reported the meeting included several zoning changes, including a re-zoning in the area of the storm water retention pond behind the mall. No meeting in September.

**Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3):** No report. The next meeting is September 26<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. Glacier National Park Community Room.

**Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC):** No report. Next meeting is in October.

**Flathead Basin Commission (FBC):** Dean Sirucek reported the FBC has received a \$12,000 grant for AIS advertising. The next meeting is October 10<sup>th</sup> at the KwaTaqNuk Resort in Polson.

**Flathead River Commission (FRC):** No report.

**Clark Fork & Kootenai River Basins Council (CFKRBC):** Verdell Jackson reported the CFKRBC is researching funding sources such as grants for projects.

Samantha Tappenbeck reported she has been talking with the CFKRBC about their interest in connecting and engaging more deeply with conservation districts. Last week Dave Shivley, Executive Committee Chair, and their Big Sky Watershed Corp (BSWC) member attended the Mineral CD meeting to give an overview of what the CFKRBC is, what they are looking to do in the future, and how they are hoping to engage with conservation districts. Samantha noted the outreach effort was good as the Central Clark Fork Basin is one of the last basins west of the divide that does not have a Watershed Restoration Plan (WRP) in place. There has been some interest from the conservation district in getting involved with restoration projects there. Samantha explained once a WRP is in place there would be a guiding document and access to an additional funding source. The Mineral CD had a lengthy discussion with Shivley about what conservation districts do and how this impacts their availability to engage with organizations such as CFKRBC. They noted the recent cuts to the 310 administration fund as well as the challenges of being an under-resourced district in an area with a lot of water and 310 permits, especially with a volunteer board and part-time administrator. Shivley and the BSWC member will be attending the Eastern Sanders CD meeting in September.



### **MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF**

- John Ellis reported that asphalt from the cart path near Par 3 at the golf course on Hwy 93 is falling into Whitefish River. He did not think the path could have been permitted as it is at the top of the bank. Dean Sirucek stated that he has discussed 310-permits with the Golf Pro, and noted there is also a large build-up of wood behind the downed tree in the river.
- John Ellis asked about the outcome of Flathead CD's WRP. Valerie explained our district received funding for the 319-grant for the Cow Creek restoration project, of which the WRP was a requirement. Dean Sirucek added that future projects are on hold while the DEQ finalizes the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the basin.
- Valerie Kurth reported that Holly McKenzie has expressed interest in becoming an Associate Supervisor.

The next 310-Stream Permit meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 10, 2018, 7:00 P.M. in the conference room of the USDA building at 133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT.

Adjournment: Verdell Jackson motioned "to adjourn." John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 P.M.

Submitted By:

Ginger Kauffman  
Administrator

Valerie Kurth, Ph. D.  
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

<u>9/10/2018</u>	<u>Ronald Buentemeier</u>	<u>Chair</u>
(Date)	(Signature)	(Title – Chair etc.)

